FCJ-061 Composing and Compositing: Integrated Digital Writing and Academic Pedagogy

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Prelude: Formal Anticipation and Origins[1]

2 This middle does not play the role of an average but rather serves as the means by which life enjoys 'the absolute speed of **movement**' (Pearson, 1999: 169)

3 As the epigraph might be understood in the context of this essay to point to movements or to methods of composing, let us begin with the premise that Part I of this essay need not necessarily come first and that the reader might happily jump from 'Collisions, Collusions, Compositions' directly to Part II, 'Composition, the Discipline, the Course and the Product.' And of course a reversal of this premise might also possible. And yet the force to read through the form of this piece as presented and 'from the beginning' 'to the end' pulsates in the adherence to or rebellion against this modal premise. This force sustains itself despite the instantiation of the essay in a digitally distributed venue. But then this is precisely the point; the form of *the* essay, this essay, and most academic writing is always-already instantiated, plugged in, and transferable, without formal alteration to the rhetoric or modes of signification, to what Derrida once described as différance or 'the formation of form,' 'the being-imprinted of the imprint' (Derrida, 1976: 62-63) and in another register that which Marshall McLuhan described as 'the medium is the message' (McLuhan, 1999:7). What does not remain unchanged, however, is the practice by which an essay, this essay, is to be read or distributed beyond Fibreculture. And so, I offer the reader the opportunity to move, surf, click, or zap past part I, 'Collisions, Collusions, Compositions' to a middle 'by which life enjoys "the absolute speed of **movement**"' (Pearson, 1999:169) and without necessitating or precluding returns and without loss. Go.

Collisions, Collusions, Compositions

4 > ...before all determination of the content, [it is rather] pure movement which produces difference. (Derrida, 1976: 62)

5 And we begin again in another middle despite our choice to pursue a tendency to continuity and the origins of writing, the passion of the origin, which will take us from here to back there, singular and without referent or link. This is a **movement**, a difference, and a middle out of which escape may not be possible. And so for this lexical **movement** we shall have tales of origins that are not origins as they are plural. This piece might have come about as the assessment report to a new program in university integrated digital writing pedagogy, about which I shall return as a coda. But this piece also erupted as an accident and fortuitous collusion of 'middles' during my not so distant graduate student past. So I will offer a history of collision in part due to what is a third origin: an old feminist habit demanding location and positionality that is itself traceable in part to that which shall not be revealed as something coming later but presently resonates as a theoretical vacuole in the middle of several detours only several of which shall make the cut here. Form is a strict taskmaster and we do fail.

6 To return to our middle, at a certain moment my ambitions were to begin to articulate what I took to be a linking of the multiply scaled, embedded and deferred temporal and spatial aesthetics of technoscience, networked circulations and human-computer interfacing, capturing and captured by coding, programming, logic, noise and pattern, and inorganic and organic *affect*ivity on its way through the post-structural, the interdisciplinary, and the transnational, around and through the multiply scaled, embedded and deferred 'aesthetics' and disciplinarily turbulent terrains of theoretical and narrative 'posthumanism,' 'transhumance,' and 'postmodernism.' From this exuberance came a dissertation loudly titled *New Media and Technoscience Fictions: Affect, Speed, Control* (2005).[2]

7 As the title and description of the dissertation project insist, *affect*, speed and control were my nodes of transit for thinking about *affect* and bio-aesthetics in contemporary fibre and visual cultures, new mediated objects, and postmodern film, fiction, and electronic literatures. In the brief interlude since this moment, integrated digital cultures has become significantly more academically instantiated. The theoretics of this project have fallen through a differential from a

cybernetic tack, swerving *back* a bit more in terms of what was once coined 'slippage' in grammatological theory or 'the irrational cut' in film theory.

8 The writing of this essay takes off from two additional discourses, composition and rhetoric, and as I began to try to theorize the grammatological move from analogue composing to digital compositing, it became increasingly critical to ask the same questions of all academic writing but particularly student writing as regards bio-aesthetics, *affects*, speeds, controls, streams and linkages. The approach shifted from a less progressive arrangement of technics, rhetoric and cultural productions to something more genealogical, topographical, tropographical, 'dilated' or rhizomatic.[3] And in doing so, to look at the objects, practices and spatial and temporal theoretics of what we think of as postmodern fictions (cinema, electronic and print literatures, and digital prose) and new media art 'as '**cross media movements**' streaming through cross circulated bodies rather than as distinct genres.[4]

9 In the meantime, I have become a tenure-track assistant professor *charged* with establishing the ethos and practices, pedagogy and instructor development of composition writing policy and the integration of digital writing technologies and pedagogies for first-year students at a large urban university. For this, experimentation with practices of cross media **movements**, distinct in their material medial specificity and distributed in their capacities and values, summoned this work to the future of integrated digital thought and pedagogy in so many intended and unintended middles.

Composition, the Discipline, the Course and the Product

10

> Never before has the proliferation of writings outside of the academy so counterpointed the compositions inside. Never before have the technologies of writing contributed so quickly to the creation of new genres. The consequence of these two factors is the creation of a writing public that, in development and in linkage to technology, parallels the development of a reading public in the 19th century. And these parallels, they raise good questions, suggest ways that literacy is created across spaces, across time. (Yancey, 2004: 297)

11 If, as Yancey asserts, 'writings outside of the academy' have generated a 'writing public that in development and in linkage to technology parallels the development of a reading public in the 19th century,' then those of us who teach in the academy would do well to consider the following questions: what does it mean to ask a student who is well-acculturated to interactions with new media, with digital integrated communications, and with compositing multimedia and hypermedia for social pleasure, to write a formal academic 'composition?' What literacies *have* been 'created across spaces, across time' that might well serve as a facet in an integrated pedagogical approach to writing in new modes and genres and producing new distributions knowledge across the academy? If the material and temporal substrates of writing traverse, bypass and exceed the academy in the creation of a writing public and correspondent generative literacies, toward what is the education of writing styles, forms and genres tending in university settings?

12 Before working toward a pedagogical anticipation in response to and beyond these questions, it is critical to locate the node of institutional positioning from which I work as it informs a history of formalized training in writing underwritten by a philosophy of writing and writing pedagogies that I will privilege in the departure points of my argument. In higher education in the United States, the term 'composition' assumes three possible and interrelated meanings. 'Composition' refers to the academic field concerned with first-year university writing. In part and as a result of the labours of this field, 'composition' is then employed to designate the required semester or two semester courses that first-year university students are nearly universally required to take and pass to meet graduation requirements and in many cases as prerequisites to advanced courses in individual degree programs. Finally, 'composition' refers to the verbal and rhetorical products made by students in said courses.[5] This compositional writing of 'papers,' the third use of the term 'composition' in the U.S., refers to academic genres of writing en masse, and in the Composition or 'Comp' classroom. It refers to the 'basics' or perhaps the generalization of the particularities of linear and synthetic styles and genres of writing that I will discuss momentarily: description, analysis, comparison, persuasion, and integrated research. Compositions, then, are academic papers of a single form but differentiated disciplinarily in conventionally designated academic genres and formats.

13

Composition is a serious business in the U.S. academy. And despite the requisite investments made in these courses by universities and colleges, writing or 'Comp' courses are perhaps also the most profoundly maligned and their labours and purposes have been the most severely feminised. Most pointedly, Comp is the course in which 'students are supposed to learn how to write' — phrase that is cross- and trans-disciplinary and can rapidly germinate numerous variants that allude to illiteracy, comma-use, and the eradication of secondary education's and particularly public education's genetic and teratological deficiencies and the fundamental tenor that liberal arts education should become far more instrumental. This phrase premises a basic assumption that students are illiterate prior to university training and not simply underexposed to and under-practiced in the traditions and conventionalised practices of academic writing. In this sociological diagnostic mode emanating from a mechanization of liberal morality and economics, students are not *yet* worthy of higher education on their first day's crossing of the university threshold, but they may demonstrate their potential *good* in the mastery of a three month writing workshop in which the whole of the English language, academic, and critical reading and writing literacies might easily be offered up in their entirety for the earning potentials of the worthy among the masses.

14 For the sake of argument, we shall assume for a moment the validity of both premises, universal illiteracy and the efficacies of the Comp course as corrective. In practice, the course bears not only the weight of the tower of English language literacies (for English is not one thing) and the burden of forestalling the second **movement** of Robert Scholes' *Rise and Fall of English* but also an enormous workload for students and instructors alike.[6] Students are expected to write compositions in a variety of analogue rhetorical styles: personal, persuasive, analytical, comparative, descriptive, research, etc. In addition, it is assumed that they will also intuit by example in a writing 'handbook' and perhaps a day of classroom instruction that models a variety of (from the point of the student) arbitrarily structured academic formatting modes: the Modern Language Association (MLA), American Psychology Association (APA), the Chicago Style, etc. The intellectual or 'content' basis of these compositions is borne forth from another highly profitable publishing gem, the composition 'reader' that includes bits of canonical English and American and in some cases 'Global' or 'World' written works from a variety of disciplines (though heavily reliant upon 'lite' humanities texts), short popular essays that offer up digestible 'issues' or 'themes', and in particularly inspired readers, stand alone images or integrated text and images are presented in either print publication or digital appendices. At what point might we assume that the student will face this sort of material in their undergraduate careers that it should play the meat to the meal of formal academic writing?

15 Given these expectations and classroom materials, critical comprehension and properly formatted written interpretation constitute the explicit goals of a Comp course. Classroom modelling of the reading process by instructors leads to the production of textual and on occasion contextual revelations, 'depths' or *meanings*. Classroom modelling (if any occurs) of the interpretive writing process leads to the production of what I term endgame or assessment writing pedagogy. The instructor models or speaks not through the rhetorical modes and valences that she would have her students learn but rather models and speaks through the qualities of the evaluative experience of grading such work. In other words, students are to write compositions in order to produce a quality of reading as positioned by an evaluating instructor rather than write to produce a quality of writing that assembles and expresses the thought of the writer in dialogue with an intended reader.

16 Though there are a host of terms and issues that might describe the endgame instructor, perhaps the most symptomatic of this assessment writing pedagogy is the demand that students write with what is often termed '*clarity*'. Clarity for all its denotative ambiguity is a style and not a measure of intelligence or a moral value. In fact the particular form of clarity most advocated in my experience might be described as a form of rhetoric lacking complexity, produced in linear expositions and descriptions retracing already established schematic accounts of knowledge 'buried' in a primary text. Furthermore, the excellent student will have learned to make the move from clarity to translucence as s/he retraces both form and content that the compositional rhetoric becomes fully un-writerly, author-less or de-subjectivised prose (even in the personal essay). In an inflected take on patriarchal, colonial, and racist strains of language policing in a chapter entitled, 'Commitment from the Mirror-Writing Box,' Trinh T. Minh-ha shatters the fantasy of clarity and because it

provides a crystallized articulation of a basic assumption from which I am writing, I will indulge in a lengthy quotation of her critique:

17 > Clarity as a purely rhetorical attribute serves the purpose of a classical feature in language, namely, its instrumentality. To write is to communicate, express, witness, impose, instruct, redeem, or save —at any rate to mean and to send out an unambiguous message. …To use language well, says the voice of literacy, cherish its classic form. Do not choose the offbeat at the cost of clarity. Obscurity is an imposition on the reader. …Clarity is a means of subjection, a quality both of official, taught language and of correct writing, two old mates of power: together they flow, together they flower, vertically, to impose an order. Let us not forget that writers who advocate the instrumentality of language are often those who cannot or choose not to see the suchness of things—a language as language—and therefore, continue to preach conformity to the norms of well-behaved writing: principles of composition, style, genre, correction, and improvement. To write 'clearly', one must incessantly prune, eliminate, forbid, purge, purify; in other words, practice what may be called an 'ablution of language' (Roland Barthes). (Minh-ha, 1989:16-17)

18 And after classroom modelling of the expected quality of purified readerly-ness, the work assigned to the student receives the corrective *treatment* by instructors (with greater and lesser evangelical and missionary zeal and cultural bleaching) in the forms of annotation, copy-editing, endnote mini-treatises, and the reduction of all student signs and rhetoric into a single, alphabetic letter or a quantified percentage-based grade — an absolute 'ablution of language' indeed. This verticality of power rests at bottom upon an instrumental literacy that proffers only the most legible and deburred meanings and adherence to the conventions established to render messaging unambiguous (contrary to the valued 'deep' texts presented in the published readers), available only in the strictest reduction of noise and excess in the formal re-presentation of the patterning of language.

19 These treatments demand intensive instructor engagement with an enormous amount of student writing, and can become a labour of harsh 'benevolence' that at times resounds with the tenor of a colonial 'uplift' mission, i.e. '"giving" a way out of poverty' or '"giving" students what they need but cannot see or get for themselves' (implied but never said: 'because they are illiterate and uneducated and I am their salvation'). To complicate the socio-economics and politics of these relations, Comp courses are more often than not staffed by 'flexible', significantly underpaid, and institutionally degraded labour — graduate students, 'long-term' adjunct instructors who are not employed on tenured faculty lines, and in the best of circumstances, junior faculty who have only recently been appointed. However, for both graduate students and junior faculty who teach 'Comp' for many years, it is also commonly held to be something of either an apprenticeship and faculty development process or a series of toll-gates at which the doctoral candidate or junior colleague must pay steep dues in order to advance up the rungs of the tower. The undervalued assist the devalued such that we might all move up a notch.

20 Because of these labour and psycho-dynamically intensive circumstances, the precarious and the debased positioning of instructors within U.S. university structures, and the hermeneutics of critical thought that undergird the task of promoting academic *literacies*, in the United States we have folk such as myself with sometimes clerical and sometimes rather Orwellian titles, such as 'Co-Director of Composition,' who are presumed to specialize in the field of Composition and Rhetoric (Comp/Rhet) in order to nurture the illiterate, the overworked and the underpaid, to 'teach pedagogy' to novitiates and to determine a philosophy or at very least a set of norms and policies regarding the practices engaged in the 'Comp' classroom that produce the most 'clear' and 'correct' academic writing or instrumental compositions possible for the sake of our content-based colleagues, and wherein the rhetoric is almost always lost to the particularities of compositional genres from the instrumental tendencies aforementioned.

21 I do not have the opportunity to reproduce the history of the field of Comp/Rhet here, but I will offer a brief sketch and an observation. The field of Composition has written most primarily to the subject of first-year student writing both in and against the tide of the biased assumption that this writer is *remedial* (a term I l obviously take issue with given the previous paragraphs and look forward to spinning a bit later as *cross mediated*). Or as my inflection against the charge of student illiteracy suggested earlier in this essay, students *somehow* arrived at university without *something* that should have been gotten *somewhere* else by *someone* else and much *earlier* in their education. This *something*, often couched as basic literacy, correct sentence, paragraph, rhetorical structures,

conventional usage of punctuation, and of course, clarity, assumes an ontological similitude to a take-out meal. Students should have picked it up and carried it with them on the way to university where it might be properly laid out and consumed. The *somewhere and someone else* and *earlier* refer to anywhere and anyone but this classroom and this professor for non-composition instructors and a marked increase in workload for Comp instructors and remediation for the students. Composition, in response to this cycle and in the advance of critical reading and writing, produced many schools of thought through which all of the noted deficiencies (for students and instructors alike) might be addressed, including a redress of the notion of deficiency itself and a critique of the regimented primacies of academic genres, particularly when deployed to gauge literacy in sum. And these discussions, studies, ethnographies and practices have indeed produced a revolution in philosophies of university writing and a plethora of pedagogical interventions in the teaching and learning or practices of writing. I would observe, however, that despite a much longer genealogy of Rhetoric exists, that the split between Composition and Rhetoric is overly profound and somewhat baffling.

22 But more important to the issues of this essay, there has also been a correspondent thirty-five to seventy year revolution in cybernetics, information technologies, and the habitus of integrated digital environments, and yet in terms of questions of digital rhetoric, the surface of the written 'composition' has barely been scratched. We have yet to fully engage with Kathleen Blake Yancey's call for an address to the disjoint of writing inside and outside of the academy, to which she assigns particular responsibility to 'technology.' And this discrepancy has provided a tremendous opportunity to reconsider compositional pedagogies, the practices of writing, the techne, technics, techniques, and technologies of writing, the *affective* materiality of composing and what I am primarily urging us to consider, digital compositing, as writing that traverses the insides and outsides of the academy and academic writing.

Compositing

23 > Thinking is what we already know we have not yet begun; measured against the shape of writing, it *is broached* only in the *epistémè*. (Derrida, 1976: 93)

24 Composition, or composing when in practice for the academic classroom, is the authoring of processes of thought in a particular form — the academic paper — expository, linear and interpretive 'writing' within given parameters of discipline and format. Digital composites, or compositing, when in practice, are the objects and practices of writing in genealogical affinity with hypertext, the sampled remix, mash-up, mod, crash-up, hybrid, bricolage, Deleuzian diagrams, and perhaps Haraway's cyborg and Vertov's montage. At its most reified, compositing is the digital design and authoring of cut and paste visual, aural, tactile and textual objects, capable of circulations of informatic exchange and reintegration through a potential network of like objects, produced, moving and existing, as Yancey urges, 'across spaces, across time, and most provocatively, capable of *cross media* ***movement***. Derrida's concerns with the constitutive 'outside' of meaning, like Deleuze's concerns with the folds of surfaces (when language is at issue), are both preoccupations with the materiality and modalities of signification and signs or the languaging of language and the mediality of mediation. In this context, we shall take these concerns and tack in a direction that leads to a consideration of inscription and pedagogical practices, not as instrumental instantiations but rather as *affectively* constitutive.[7] And as compositions have generatively differed across scrolls, quilled parchment, manual typewritings, and word-processed papers, in their ends, paper productions *complete* the inscription process. Unlike compositions, paper or hardcopy is *not a possible end* for composited objects.

25 This trajectory of distinction cannot be overstated, even in terms of the status of compositions. The papered composition, publication, book, or student draft is founded, as are digital texts, in its stilled or accelerated **movements**, material substrates, temporalities, and constraining or 'formal' properties—the indivisible *manu*script. A paper is *handed in* and books are *signed*. As a material object, the authorial script is whole and stands in a correspondent holistic metonymy with the authorial body, the propertied production of a person, and the properly personal. In itself, the manuscript is a uni-directional, horizontal missive. Of course, in terms of rhetoric, thought, and the **movement** of thinking, the script reads in multiplicities. But nevertheless, the material practices of writerly production differ from the reception in that the manuscript is bound to the form, a specific *design* on paper. For the writer, this suggests a spatialising set of design tasks to be

learned in composition class as well: margins, headers, title pages, and paragraph typography to name a few issues. These spatialized constraints are also enforced rhetorically: reductive synthesis (the arms of the hydra resolved unto a trunk), argumentative interpretation (the ground, the base, the core, the bark, the future of limbs), and citational formatting (the ground came from X, the base from Y, the bark from Z).

26 Composition requires cognitive re-presentation within a given topography and a set temporal span regardless of the shapes and speeds that might arise in processes of cognition, interpretation and composing, regardless of any actual thinking. The various generic qualities of academic writing in specific *fields* provides strict design parameters through a shared and discreet legend against which the future of manuscripted thought must tabulate itself to be recognized as accountable literate writing. The medium is the message only insofar as its formal excesses cannot transmit as anything but noise and chaos. Intertextuality resides only at the level of readership and writerly citation thresholding the full force of writerly signification in the manuscript to remain expository, always-already exposed, and above all, transparent and clear. Excess tensions and force are aporetic (provocatively in 'good' writers and painfully in less experienced writers), thus enabling a new cycle of hermeneutical intertextuality and reception that posit no surprises for any reader (and at the same time positing the reader as the 'explorer of hidden meanings'—this is our most muddled contradiction for students in terms of the critical turns we demand as teachers).

27 A composite or composited text is not bound for paper, and while it might be possible to download hardcopy of all possible sub-surface texts (hyperlinks, blog commentary, frame-by-frame streaming media), **it is not possible to download the resonant dynamics** or 'radiant textuality' (McGann, 2001) of a live hyperlink [16], the interactive **movement** of digital commentary, the stream in streaming media, or sound of any kind. Integrated digital texts are on the most part small-screened, and produced by composing textualities and by means of constructivist software control codes and their distillation in user functions, in distinction to composition, which is a scripted production of hermeneutical, synthetic, dialectical or analytical inscriptions of the depths and meanings found in 'primary texts.' And what is key for the academic purist to understand is that manuscripted compositional practices comprise one of many modes already in the integrated digital mix, as it were. **Digital objects are produced such that compositional intertextuality folds into and/or unfolds across composited cross mediation, resonant through particularized and distributed fields and domains**. The spaces and temporalities of critical engagement, interpretation and composition remain rhetorically and textually present simultaneous to their opening onto actualizing multiple spaces and temporalities, **movements** and speeds. This is a theoretical description of **intertextual 'writing' across integrated digital platforms** such as MySpace or Facebook, blogs, wikis, webpages, or digital archives. This is a theoretical description of **communicating in 'mixed reality.'**

Mixed Reality and Cross Media *Movements*

28 > Recall that even before we began creating formal systems of visual signs—systems that generate this very sentence-object you are now reading—the language we use is woven from audible and visible elements. And as the syntax of the last sentence is designed to suggest, this textual condition of ours is constructed as a play of incommensurable elements, of which temporality is one. … Textual space and textual time are n-dimensional simply because they locate embodied actions and events. (McGann, 2001: xiii-xiv)

29 Compositing is a production of interactive and dynamic digital surfaces and topographies, mobile and translatable across space and time, platform, field and domain. They are capable of cross media **movements** in what might be thought of as uneven terrains of mixed reality. Cross media **movements** are a way to rethink theoretical and critical approaches to studies of contemporary digital and analogue cultural production and sociality that presume a developmental or familial 'newness' or technological distinction as departure points for critique and/or analysis. That certain media platforms impose strict thresholds or operate in constrained coded or material substrates demands that we are particular while at the same time working with the capacities of digitised transit and transposition of partial and complete objects, code, and even the embedding of platforms (i.e. a QuickTime clip in a blog that is providing RSS feed to a website housed in an archive). Material considerations of quality, **movement**, symbiotic exchange, feedback streams, relations of motion and rest, speed, control and *affect*, and expressive tendencies in dialogue

between what is divided into analogue and digital media might offer a far more provocative approach to our proliferating mixed reality and its corresponding popular compositional condition: from diaries and yearbooks to MySpace, Facebook and Xanga; cut-ups to mash-ups; adaptations to mods; bricolage to HTML and CSS; home video and television to YouTube. Each is particular but all are in a circuit of movement and speed relative to the constellation of objects and streams in the field. Thus, cross media movements as a critical tack offers an excellent departure point from which to consider the sociality and knowledge-based capacities of mixed reality. This allows and in fact necessitates a reconsideration of pedagogies — rhetorical, compositional and otherwise— across disciplines and fields.[8]

30 **Mixed reality is an epistemological and ontological understanding of the analogue world as riddled—albeit unevenly but also ubiquitously—with portals and interfaces for digitisation, networked computing, and human computer interfacing.** However, what then needs explicit attention is the discursive status of the 'analogue.' While the analogue is always-already considered a supplement to digitality or electronics (and these are not synonymous), the analogue also occupied a mode in which it might be used synonymously with 'nature' or the 'natural' world. The pre-electronic equation of analogue/nature assumes its supplement to be industrial mechanics/technology (and in advanced math, this becomes nature/culture/the human). But strangely, in the onto-epistemic discourses of digital/electronic technicities, the natural and the industrial/mechanical (not to mention culture and the human) have slipped into the same onto-genetic status relative to digital and electronic media. In other words, the supplementary discourse, an as yet unchanged logic despite the ontogenetic shift, posits nature-mechanics/ analogue over and against integrated electronics/digitality. What is needed to resolve the problematic of these old equations is a consideration of materiality that does not presume the completion of form, or rather the freezing of form — analogue, natural, mechanical or electronic — is: a) possible or revelatory or b) equivalent to ontology or epistemology.

31 In addition, the discursive tension that worked to critically sediment the mechanical/natural divide and generated both revelatory schema for political **movement** in the form of the critical powers of revelation (Darwin, Freud, Marx, natural history, national history, critical theory and the Frankfurt School, etc.) and vertical/spatial modes of technical territorialization (high rises, corporations, organized labour, institutionalisation, nation-state formations, democratic governmentality, fascism, from punish to discipline) ultimately hinged on the same capacity to navigate efficiently and deeply from one medial position on a two-dimensional real-time grid to a second position on a two-dimensional real-time grid, to freeze or capture the form of this **movement**, and to trace the purity of these lines as form such that the trace is confused passionately with the pregiven or the origin. Thus what emerges out of the mechanical/natural tension is an 'anxiety of influence' of capture, of form, of consistency, and of efficiency … a dialectical model for history, temporality and matter that takes its epistemological effects (but not its *affects*!) for its ontology.

32 What shifts in the analogue/digital tension is that this 'anxiety of influence' works in both directions between analogue (nature + human + industrial mechanics) and digital productions and need not be limited to a single synthetic interface between two well defined players operating on a real-time grid. This opening of temporal and spatial fields does not so much produce an anxiety of inheritance as it exponentially grows modes of productive and compositional creativity and expression … an anxiety of excess perhaps. Furthermore, this speedy dilation of productive, compositional and of course receptive modes (a schema of power predicated on constellated surface motion (nodes, networks, demographics, populations), command, control, communications (cybernetics) rather than folded depths) have been quick enough to bypass certain conserving and longer lived, spatialized and verticalise cultural forces, not limited to but certainly including corporate and academic controls, *affectively* flattening prior powers of **movement** and intensity.

33 In digital practices the capacity to diffract, bypass or go faster than the conventional restrictions on sociality, knowledge production, broadcast, publication, selection, review, and distribution are engendering a popularist DIY (do-it-yourself), BY (broadcast yourself) and DIWO (do-it-with-others) ethos that fuels the extraordinary compositional productivity of user-generated content across Web 2.0 platforms and accelerates the morphologies of mixed reality and cross media movements and interfacing. But from the vantage of digital cultures, these material and epistemic tensions of

the supposed analogue/digital divide are not oppositional. In fact, verticality generates movement when thought with temporality and curvilinear dimensionality (surfing, 'levels' of access, embedded coding practices); horizontality generates field resonances when thought with temporality, surface thicknesses across a composite topography (wi-fi hotspots, hyperlinks, subway entrances, access codes). It is only when compositional movement and temporalities are frozen or a composition is laboured to remain at 'zero-speed temporality' does an unforgiving and unyielding articulation of form and structure become theoretically an abstract possibility (Bianco, 2005:95). Repetition of this labour produces convention; the repetition of convention produces form and structures. The forms and structures are read critically to have been dormant and awaiting release such that the epistemological effects of these labours are mistaken for ontology. This is not an argument against the work performed to execute forms and structures but one that argues against the sacralization of formalist tendencies at the threshold of the ideal. For the rest and the real, mixed reality and cross mediated **movement** offer modes of thinking the material plane of consistency, force and its expressive capacities, including academic writing and pedagogy. What digital compositing offers is a method by which to make the correspondence between living mixed reality through cross media currents and making academic knowledge at university glaringly obvious and affectively resonant for our students and ourselves.

Social Compositing (Writing Inside/Outside the Academy): 2 Classroom Detours

34 > Connectivity is more a status than a state or a thing. Connectivity is a 'status' in both the technical and political sense of the term. Connectivity can be high or low, it can be wide or narrow, and it can be centralized or decentralized. (Thacker, 2004: 167)

35 A necessary disruption — for my call to digital connectivity, circulations and compositings will occur in what I have described as an 'unevenly' distributed mixed reality. There will be hot spots and dead spots. There will be bodies not in transit and unable to access. And thus before continuing a critical elaboration of compositing, it is important to take up the primary critical pedagogical refrain decried when the subjects of digital technology and higher education are raised together: the digital divide.

36 In the U.S., the digital divide primarily referred to unequal access to networked digital technologies at large, particularly in terms of race and class barriers to private access (Who can afford a PC or Mac? Who can afford dial-up, DSL, or cable connection? Whose communities are more likely to experience thick exposures to digital technologies and mixed reality as a result?) These questions did not end with the individual user but have in fact also been addressed in the obscene discrepancies of funding in public primary and secondary education. What (usually suburban and small town) public schools receive sufficient funding for computer labs and training? What (usually inner city) public schools do not receive sufficient funding for books much the less networked communications? Why do some ('city') public schools receive two to three times the funding, including earmarked monies for instructional technologies, while other ('*inner* city') public schools do not? These issues have found their way into the courts in New York State, as New York City sues the state for billions of dollars not released to the City public schools. These make for an interesting backdrop against which an argument might be made for the sluicing of social compositing into the classroom. With such discrepancies and structural inequities of access, who, where and how are there students compositing for social pleasure?

37 In response, I would like to suggest two illustrative detours from my classroom experience at two different universities, Queens College of the City University of New York (CUNY) and Polytechnic University, taken from the recent past. These not only model the disparate span of the digital divide in New York City, but also model the multiplicities and adaptabilities of social compositing across social stratifications. Both universities are located in New York City in the boroughs of Queens and Brooklyn respectively. The students from each university can be characterized generally as working-class, the exceptions tending more toward poverty than toward middle-class privilege. The student bodies are comprised of a majority of first and second generation immigrants from every part of the globe and constitutive of radical national, racial, ethnic, religious, social and linguistic diversity, and most students are multi-lingual as a result. Many are drawn from New York City Public High Schools, Catholic and Protestant parochial schools, and yeshiva. However, there are significant differences as well.

38

Polytechnic University is primarily an institution invested in technical baccalaureate education, and most students pursue computer programming or various engineering programs. Males make up the overwhelming majority of students and if a Poly student attended a New York City high school, most likely he graduated from the 'specialized' science and math campuses, one of which is only blocks away. Many Poly students must work part-time to support their university studies, but many are also likely to find technical or financial employment in relatively well-paid part-time work.

39 On the other hand, CUNY is a significantly under-funded 19-campus public university system made up of two-year community colleges, four-year senior (baccalaureate) colleges, and a centralized graduate campus. CUNY students in general, but in the case at Queens College in particular, attend 'normal' New York City high schools or religious education. Women make up the overwhelming majority of students and few attend 'specialized' public schools. Most students work half- to full-time jobs, varying from low-paying service wage labour to salaried service sector careers. Many have serious community and family responsibilities as well.

40 All of these circumstantial factors undergird, exacerbate or enhance what is the most significant difference in terms of a discussion of composition, compositing and the status of writing and pedagogy, inside and/or outside of the academy: Poly students, to the last, have laptop computers, a wireless network, and explicit hardware, firmware and software training, if not in software and hardware design and engineering, then certainly in advanced software use and language acquisition. In fact, this ubiquitous computing program began the year I arrived at Poly (1997) and was handed an IBM-sponsored laptop. At the time of my arrival at Queens College in the fall of 2002, students were still sharing a small, unreliable, and rather contagious 'lab.' Since then, students are able to access a wireless network and borrow laptops for limited use from the library. There are now several well-staffed computer labs across campus. However, there is no training in software use and language acquisition outside of basic workshops and pursuing a major in the Computer Science Department. Given these two remarkably disparate academic worlds, I will offer two examples to demonstrate that neither 'access' nor exposure to that which has become the conventional model for 'having technology' mitigates the engagement of social compositing. That it occurs is *not* at issue in terms of my argument that academic writing might do well to draw from a variety of modes of 'social compositing.' Rather, *how* it occurs is.

41 *Classroom detour #1: Queens College*. On the due date of a difficult paper assignment for a major's elective course on theory, writing and fiction, I watched a student drop a pile of stapled hardcopy on my 'professor's desk,' which I did not use except to collect homework. The student then returned to her seat, reached immediately into her bag, took out her cellular telephone, and digitally photographed me standing behind her paper at the moment in which she was released from its trials. She then text-messaged the photo and accompanying commentary regarding the completion of said professor's 'vicious' assignment to four other friends (including two sitting in this very classroom). Though I did notice the photographic moment, her text-messaging motions, and the buzzing vibration of her two colleagues' cell phones, it was not until I asked her later about her actions (and to turn off the telephone) that their fullness came to meaning. She explained to me that the significance of the assignment was in capturing the **movement** of the transmission of the paper and all of its *processes*, complete and fixed, from her body to mine, and cross mediating (my phrase, not hers) this moment and place, its force of signification through a collective network (the 2 colleagues in the classroom and two outside of the classroom) through a composite/ composited (text + image + times + movements) expression. Given that we had worked on collage, bricolage and theories of imbrication for the paper assignment, the force of this moment struck me. This instant message 'composition' did not circuit through anything akin to the *affect*ive conduits of the paper-writing frenzy or paralysis that had probably occurred across the body of the student the previous night. And if the student were asked, it would have been highly unlikely that there might be any report of sensate, *affect*ive, much the less cognitive correlation between these two communicative compositions—despite their congress with one another theoretically.

42 *Classroom detour #1: Polytechnic University*. As is my ritual, I stood behind the professor's desk, which I do not use except for collecting student work. On this due date, students, who were first year Master's degree candidates (MFA) in a combined theoretical/historical/studio program in new media, were given the option of providing hard copy or 'dropping' their papers in the digital drop box for our class. The assignment, difficult in its own terms, comprised a long-term comparative

and theoretical analysis of three films that took as their rhetorical and formal subjects simultaneous and multiple temporalities (this assignment abides in a non-digital visual studies component of a longer course that had not yet arrived at integrated digital technologies). I watched a student who felt as invested in his critical studies as his lab work hit the return key to post what I was later to discover was his undercooked paper in the digital drop-box. He then immediately returned to uploading a hacked, or let's say, borrowed and adapted, mod file (his sound was up and blared in the room) to his one and a half minute game sequence that he and four friends design and code outside of the curriculum of the program for fun and social competition. I asked about the sound and the project, assuming it belonged to one of his studio courses and discovered that not only did the critical studies constitute a vacuole in his regular practices of compositing, but so did his studio assignments. When asked about the assigned work, he said that he felt that the assigned compositions (critical and studio) were little other than a pause in his 'real stuff,' which I took to mean his thinking, creative capacities, and the composited objects that were produced from them. When asked if he saw the gleaning of theoretical texts, visual objects and films into our assigned textual composition as something like the tweaking of a deterritorialized sound file for reintegration in his own game, his response was politely neutral in its reference to the materiality of sound versus the vacuole of 'paper-writing.'

43 On the surfaces, many correlations might have been made these two inter-textual and cross mediated authoring actions yet the compositional processes did not connect much the less provide any *affect*ive sense of kinship between the objects. Both of these examples occurred in the same semester and perhaps more provocatively in the extrapolation and hyper-mediation of these concurrent moments, we might ask ourselves to envision 'writing' under these circumstances, in the future-present of our students and ourselves, and most certainly grammatologically and in terms of different relations of **movement**, embodiment, perception, sensation, *affect* and production.

Transitions, Transformations, Transversals: Taking Issue with Translations

44

> Whenever you look at an image, there's a ruthless logic of selection that you have to go through to simply create a sense of order. The end product of this palimpsest of perception is a composite of all the thoughts and actions you sift through over the last several microseconds—a sound-bite reflection of a process that's a new update of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein or the German proto Expressionist 1920 film Der Golem, but this time it's the imaginary creature made of the interplay of fragments of time, code, and (all puns intended) memory and flesh. Paul D. Miller (DJ Spooky)

45 So what are we to make of the materiality of digital images and sound versus the vacuole of 'papers,' as my Poly student points out? Or perhaps more pointedly, how are digital text, images, and sound to be considered formal elements of 'real paper,' as a senior colleague queried at a recent faculty development workshop? Certainly in the humanities the narrative has offered a shared strain through which prose and film might be housed in the same prison house of language, and Barthes has offered similar accommodation to photography and to an extent certain forms of music. This skeumorphic tendency also appears at moments in Lev Manovich's *The Language of New Media* (2001) . In this now Ur-text of digital studies and at a key moment in his description of analogue to digital shifts, Manovich offers a techno-progressivist argument suggesting that the cinematic imaginary is being over-taken and radicalized by archival, user-screened interaction in which 'new media embeds cinema-style illusions within the larger framework of an interactive control surface' (Manovich, 2001: 210-211).

46 Though this may seem a mere theoretical quibble, I'd like to consider this recall of cinema to ground new media as a critical misstep in our cross media movements between composing and compositing. It is a misstep precisely because of its tendency toward the developmental reification of forms and genres—an impulse that marks Manovich's text as quality academic writing but also seems rather akin to Kathleen Blake Yancey's diagnosis of technological progress as the primary correlate to a reading and writing public. In both cases, technology is a black box that hides within itself earlier black boxes in chronological accumulation and generational influence. 'Interactive control surfaces' contain cinema (but not broadcast television, radio, short-wave or animation?) in Manovich's example; in Yancey's comments, she explicitly cites 'development' of technologies that 'parallels' the industrial context in which 'the development [and the second use of this word in one line] of a reading public in the 19th century.' Mass printing in the reading public of the 19th

century is analogous to an unnamed 'development' 'in linkage to technology' that is now creating a 21st century mass '*writing* public.' Aside from theoretical problems such as the division of reading and writing as well as the functionalist tenor of the analogy, the descriptive and comparative impulse is provocative but also marks Yancey's comments as an articulation of legible academic rhetoric. Indeed, for both, the medial translation is contained by an already laboured and distributed genre or form. New media is new cinema; the printing press is to reading as (the digital writing platform left unspecified) is to writing. While the urge to translation and ***movement*** is critical, there is a scripting here of historical practice that can become rather conscripting in terms of expression. If composited media must adhere to the aesthetic or critical practices of composed analogue media in order to circulate as legible and valued knowledge objects then we find ourselves once again in what I described earlier as endgame or assessment producers and composers—producing only to the established limitations of value of a previous mode of production. For academic writing, this curtails the very call at which Manovich's translation and Yancey's pedagogical rallying cry aim. For progressive pedagogy, the curtailment disavows the materiality of lived practice.

47 Rhetoric, as mentioned earlier is the forgotten partner of composition and classically alludes to the styles of persuasion in oration and ultimately argument. Style manuals, predating the composition reader, are still a staple of the composition classroom. Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* offered the backbone of the beast of writing instruction in my own undergraduate experience. However, due to profound differences in the material substrates, syntax, grammars, codes and tacit practices, integrated digital texts and composited objects may produce styles and even forms that are not re-presentations of longer lived analogue media. Given this, why should we continue to follow faithfully along the generational modus to which we have become accustomed, 1.2 consumes 1.1 but 1.1 always already contained 1.2 inside itself, like Aristotle's homunculus, ready to emerge. Thus, new media ate up cinema (and television?), cinema rocked the essayists and orators from their chairs and podiums and classical oration always held a little YouTube clip in its belly. This fury of McLuhan-esque medial cannibalism and Kittler-esque medial borgism suggests that digital media has embedded cinematic, photographic, novelistic, and newsprint style illusions accounting for a genealogy that leads to a moving series of *pictographs*, narrativized, composites cut from real life—storytelling in scissor cut and taped bits of pictures and text (and later sound and dialogue after swallowing radio).

48 Montage is of course a composite but generally theorized as one labouring to narrative or ideological continuities (which may have something to do with the force of signification of the realist novel and the labour spent to correlate the two). However, montage is not the same practice or method of compositing nor of embedding by which digital styles much the less that by which photographic, novelistic, or news styles are produced. There are differences in the material production of these forms and material continuities: silicone, celluloid, iodine vapours, silver salts, typesetting, etc. Nor can these media and their 'styles' be reduced to their instantiations as devices. A camera is not photography, a photograph or photographic style. Likewise, mass printing presses do not produce the bodies of readers nor do integrated communications devices transmit the fingering bodies of text messengers. While we might easily list the material that constitutes the object-hood of a camera or a photograph, what might we list as the materiality of photography or worse photographic style? Novelistic style? Newsprint style? Visuality, temporality, (bin)ocularity, language, text, spectacularity, the interval, the grapheme and so on? From whence is produced the material **movement** of style and of a style of thought?

49 So the question becomes by what modalities of distinction and presence can we address and perhaps respond to the question of the materiality of integrated digital media that produce mass writing in genres outside of the academy. Are not these linkages and embedded materialities interfaced with dynamic and interactive bodies? Are not bodies the cross mediated objects under grammatological construction? Mark Hansen, in *New Philosophy for New Media*, has been at this question for sometime, albeit not in terms of writing but in terms of new media art.[9] He writes:

50 > ...to put it in simple terms, it is the body—the body's scope of perceptual and affective possibilities—that informs the medial interfaces. This means that with the flexibility brought by digitalisation, *there occurs a displacement of the framing function of medial interfaces back onto the body from which they themselves originally sprang* (Hansen, 2004: 22).

51

In Hansen's phenomenology, the question of the body is an *affect*ive and receptive one rather than an expressive one. In this way and despite significant differences, Hansen's work shares a focus on reception and consumption with theorists such as Rei Terada, Sianne Ngai, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Theresa Brennan whose work on *affect* takes *affect*ion to be primarily an emotive or psychoanalytic register of events and powers that have come to pass.[10] But in the process of production, composing or articulation, how does a body materially and affectively engage the cross medial interfaces and movements of writing as an assemblage or composite? Of composition? These questions are critical to any analysis of thought and cognition and by extension here—composing in academic genres. What is the mediated embodiment of formal academic writing? First, it is exterior to the given forms that make academic writing formal. It must be taught. It demands a synthetic heterogeneity rendered linear by means of interpretive 'transitions' or integration. From this particularity let me point to a digital analogy in terms of the embodiment of interactive textuality.

52 While transitions, in the traditional sense of academic composition, are possible in the composited piece, the digital text hovers in time with the capacities for transformation and transpositional shifts energetically spatialized in the user's body as a pause or link. The hyper-mediated text hovers in the compassability of not just transitional rhetorical **movement** but a transversal rhetoric of enfleshed resonance and cognition. Seamlessness or epistemological suturing does not govern the **movements**. Digital compositing allows the heterogeneity of text a corresponding heterotropic materiality, temporality and spatiality that is not simply a function of the psychoanalytic imaginary but also a function of the integrated microphysics of the matters of the digital platform and the bodies at play. Saturations, rhythms, pixilation rates, reaction/navigation cycles all perform at scales below the register of cognition as bio-aesthetics, as material vibe, groove and *affect* circuiting the body.

53 Furthermore, this composited dimensionality demands an embodied reception and interactivity in its legibility, or as Hansen suggests, 'the digital calls on us to invest the body as that "place" where the self-differing of media gets concretised' (Hansen, 2004: 31).] Academic composing, on the other hand, concretises 'the' paper, which flees the authorial body, as my classroom detours were wont to describe. The composition must close down its space and temporality to edify the argument contained by its form. The reader then enters this edifice as a structurally fixed space in which she seeks the fissures in the stanchions or the rooms that boast far too many doors and windows to remain structurally sound. If, as Hansen suggests, the digital invests the space of the body with the 'place where the self-differing of media gets concretised' then we might suggest that the academic composition invests the space of the academy with the place where the self-same-ing of writing and thought 'gets concretised.' The body's encounter with media cannot contain in its epistemological effects the ontology of media. Instead, one must consider the powers of formal closure and the constraints to the force of signification at play in a theory that must do enormous work to produce digital concrete. If we consider Hansen's claims for digital writing alongside the claims for academic writing, then there is no unsolved mystery behind Yancey's observation that 'never before has the proliferation of writings outside of the academy so counter-pointed the compositions inside' or that 'never before have the technologies of writing contributed so quickly to the creation of new genres.' It is precisely the foreclosure of academic space and compositional places to the digitally mediated body that produces the counter-positioning of an inside and outside of the academy as well as the proliferation of non-academic genres.

54 And certainly this reterritorialization of the grapheme must also visit the graphic. To return to Manovich's claim regarding new media's successive relation to the cinematic versus the grammatological—the concept of 'illusions' takes us away from the Bergsonian mattering of perception and images that underlay much of the materialist thought of contemporary visual theories. 'Illusions' are of course suggestive of the psychoanalytic discourses expressing phantasmatic and libidinal qualities in cinematic spectatorship. And here Walter Benjamin must also lay yet another concretising claim on the states of the body in compositional action; we must add mass reproducibility—more an assertion of temporal qualities of the apparatus (how fast? How many how fast? How many how fast simultaneously?) than a comment on the particular material components of cinema. Style is no less stingy and effusive with its matterings in compositional discourse, sometimes grounded in the romantic mist of biological genius, style in

the flesh or the DNA of the auteur, depending on the romance at hand, and at others grounded in the economy of simple sentence-mapping exercises learned at age 11 in Mrs. Plumleigh's English class (Hemingway {Proper noun} writes {Verb/Predicate-third person singular} {period}). Matter matters. *Human* matters are a modification and subset of matters {period}.

55 Embedding is a sturdy enough verb and instantiation an even sturdier noun (as should be in the logic of substance and presence in grammar). And we are global witnesses to embedded journalists working in the circuits of global, networked and digital communications media across a variety of platforms (newsprint, internet, cable television) and they do indeed yield an enormous sense of the embedding of journalistic-style illusions. And sense here must assume a complicated and perhaps ambivalent tension in its vocabulary. In a proper Marxist critique, we might simply unveil these illusory machinations or rather take the machine from behind to locate this labour of sense and style. But Manovich points to a passivity of consumption that complicates the labour power at work in sense and style and continues 'Illusion is subordinated to action, depth to surface, window to imaginary universe to control panel' (Manovich, 2001: 211). If we read the first clause thickly chocked with libidinal and phantasmatic spectatorship, then this passivity of cinema-style illusions becomes quite troublesome particularly when plotted supplementarily against his inviting call to 'action' and **movement**. The discourse of psychoanalytic desire is not consistent with such a mass and intentional action nor with its correspondent partner paralytic passivity, but rather moves through domains of processual receptivity, which means that we've shifted bodily registers from the sub-individual in which the Wunderblock of 'illusions' in psycho-dynamics traces to the brute meat of a stilled body in a domineering agential darkness of a movie theatre, corpse-like and propped in the seat by the mere forces of gravity and quantum antagonisms. Furthermore, screened desire is no less desire but only differently screened at the multiplex and in front of a Mac. Size (and lighting) may matter, but the 'depth' of screened surfaces and the superficiality of screened depths require differential material thresholds and vantage points that do not depend upon projection and backlighting nor do they fall upon the corpses of pre-given disciplining forms or genres. The power of screened verticality may offer as phantasmatic a narrative, but the materiality of five-meter tall bodies is another story.

56 And the final quibble, how is the digital display not also a 'window to [an] imaginary universe?' How are rather notorious and other less offensive operating systems somehow inconsistent with a window from the vantage point of the user/producer? What of televisual control panels, remotes, zapping, clicking, and surfing? What of the sized-to-fit verticality of screened interactions or tactility of the interface? Of the grammatological interactivity? What might be embedded in Manovich's passage is the style of a material language used by a rather brilliant new media producer of soft cinema who is fluent in particular codes and for whom embedding objects is an organizing and tacit *affect*ive practice and syntax, but in this case, one that jumps scales in this analysis. In fact, this entire quotation reads:

57 > Just as any particular software application is embedded, both metaphorically and literally, within the larger framework of the operating system, new media embeds cinema-style illusions within the larger framework of an interactive control surface. Illusion is subordinated to action, depth to surface, window to imaginary universe to control panel. From commanding a dark movie theater, the cinema image, this twentieth-century illusion and therapy machine par excellence, becomes just a small window on a computer screen, one stream among many others coming to us through the network, one file among numerous others on our hard drives. (Manovich, 2001: 210-211)

58 What does the rhetoric of 'metaphorically and literally' mean here in terms of materiality? 'Literally' *literally* means readably. Literary, social and political critics certainly understand the contestation of readability, legibility, intent and reception, discourse communities, and such, and to a echo a refrain from an moment above, there is no more noble goal projected onto a composition specialist by her colleagues across the disciplines than that she teach clear 'readability.' If that fails, she might make 'basic English' our students' number one priority in the composition class, as if academic fluencies, professorial legibility, and rhetorical context and genre were one. And of course a metaphor asks us to imagine difference as similarity by means of a transversal or diagrammatic relationship. How is the 'cinema image'—not cinematic image or style—both an 'illusion and therapy machine' passively condensed into embedded code? These are material and rhetorical inconsistencies or, perhaps closer to the quick, the failings of my own preferred

academic style. For still, like reading Freud, I find myself more convinced by Manovich's writing style than by his theory of the family tree of new media. Indeed, the mechanisms of digital media can swallow filmic objects such that they become 'one file among numerous others on our hard drive' and indeed photographic depth and classical perspective so prescriptive in much analogue, anthropomorphic, binocular-centric visual regime but seemingly lapsed in digital visuality. But in these examples, analysis is occurring on two levels, both of which are captured in a black box of media in progression from lesser to better-abled and describe-able black boxes.

59 However, if there is something of an onto-epistemological claim in the assertion that new media invaginates cinema-style and its [passive] receptivity as 'one stream among many others coming t[hr]o[ugh] us,' then indeed constitutive modalities of thought, knowledge, matter, writing and composition must have shifted transversally. And it is here that these three suggestive modes style (illusions to action), materialization (depths and surfaces), and *affect* (windows to controls) must be released from their instantiation in narrative logic and compositional closures. And it is here that the power of Manovich's work in becomes so resonant.

Sightlines and Vantage Points: Pedagogy

60 ...multiplicities give form to processes not to the final product... (DeLanda, 2002: 22)

61 Solidity, perspectival fixity, objectivity, and absolute learning—my students crave nothing less in the classroom and yet they would not abide a bit of it outside. The sightlines of composites produce a need for composite vision, hearing, and action, a germinating body that can holistically consume and become multiplicity at once. This and getting the assignment 'right.' This desire to be all and become more through consumption of goods, time, space, attention requires distribution and selection of a palimpsest as D.J. Spooky/Paul Miller wrote in the passage cited earlier. It also allows for writing in lexia, composites of motion and process rather than writing in redacted wholes, compositions of contraction.

62 In the spring of 2001, I began to require my Poly students to maintain their own webpages, which were linked through a common course page that I constructed. Students could produce the pages in whatever software formats they were already literate, including word-processing programs such as Microsoft Word. We engaged a variety of texts, including theory, pop culture, film, e-fiction, film and more traditional literary objects. For their final assignment, which consisted of a dialogue between theoretical and cultural productions, they needed to formally enact this synthetic work in a digital and an analogue object. Many students wrote 'good' or proper compositions with some hyperlinking and handed in hardcopy of the paper as the analogue to the digital. This occurred despite my invocation that the formal processes of both pieces needed to speak to the rhetorical **movement**. For these students, no consideration was given to the potential for temporal-spatial dynamism or design primarily because students 'didn't think an English teacher would allow' *that* or consider it 'writing.'

63 One student did take up my offer and produced an extraordinary and sensate website that shifted if the user hovered too long in one spot. The experience constantly enacted an anxiety of slippage, departure, competing speeds and a keenly spatialized affect of sliding backward away from something important. The films that the student analysed were *Fight Club* (1999), *Requiem for a Dream* (2000), and *Memento* (2000). And as his analogue process, he constructed a perforated Moebius strip, a construct that we had discussed in class, on which textual hardcopy and images were spliced. As the reader attempted to read properly, the perforations would split the page and the text would become illegible, forcing the reader to unravel the next sheet. The process continued, leaving the reader with bits of images and argument and loose sheets of paper. This student's webpage and Moebius paper were simple cut and paste jobs, but in terms of the endgame of his own critical thought, they were also functions of creative criticism that *affect*ively gave body to rhetoric and gave rhetoric to bodies.

Qualities and Types

64 But Echo is an insurgent. Despite the divine constraints imposed upon her, she still manages to subvert the gods' ruling. After all, her repetitions are far from digital, much closer to analog. Echo colours the words with faint traces of sorrow (The Narcissus Myth) or accusation (The Pan Myth) never present in the original. ... Myth makes Echo the subject of longing and desire. Physics makes

> Echo the subject of distance and design. Where emotion and reason are concerned both claims are accurate. (Danielewski, 2000: 41 & 50)

65 If we are to grab hold of the monstrously quick and proliferating productions, modes and practices that sit stuffed together in the terms new media and digital media, is it from these generic postures, departures, or perhaps, just simply, models that theory is to attend the digitalisation of cultural production? The modifiers of these descriptors, 'new' and 'digital', offer two paths: evolution and technicity. Post-structural theorization of the last forty (to perhaps four thousand in Western philosophy) years has laboured excessively to produce the explanatory limit conditions of developmental narratives, realism and/or functional pragmatism, and I am convinced.

66 While a good deal of media critique engages the familiar work of description, definition, typing and pedagogy, the question of 'new' media versus 'old' media seems an unyielding touchstone or point of departure for much of the scholarly work that would theorize contemporary technological and media cultures. Whether our work locates its methodology in a serial repetition of developmental narratives of chronologized and sequentialized progress that registers the ruptures, breaks or bifurcations of particular strains of practice, sociality, hardware and software, or even epistemology and ontology, the nearly ubiquitous scholarly investment in keeping track of our histories and even genealogies rarely privileges **movement** as the trope of choice. This does not imply that **movement** is not also subject to narratization nor does it imply that descriptions of necessary motions of interactivity have not been produced and analysed. Perhaps, given the seductive schematisation of 'mapping' technological trajectories, the quality of the trajectory itself resonates less loudly, less securely, and less determinately. For qualities, like proliferations, confront an epistemology of the mastery of content, the nostalgia for lost powers and the discomfiting distance of *tempus fugit*, with a decidedly irresolvable challenge and a well-worn theoretical question; how does the flight of butterfly translate when pinned dead to an insect display board? If the capture of the thing also constitutes its death and produces by this transformation a new entity, how might we 'scholarize' this flight but through the capture of **movement** transformed into a deadened and mastered object archived in and among other similar objects? The loss of motion bottles up and cuts out the spatio-temporal dynamic of powdery wings, bouncing and bobbing 'in mid-air' across an incessant and living diegesis—flight. The lineage or anatomisation of butterflies as insects cannot recover this quality nor can a comparative analysis of butterflies versus beetles. Is it significant or provocative to assert that one flies and the other flies less? Perhaps, in some ways, the answer is 'yes.' But this comparative typology cannot express the quality of the flight of butterflies or beetles, for that matter, except through a negating cut, a formal containment. Is it not possible to take flight over stillness?

67 It is this negating cut, a mode of scholarly production in its own right, that is operating as a privileged 'approach' to the relationship between digital media and analogue media today. And it is the point of my call to holistic integrated digital writing pedagogies in order to tease out not just the qualities of digital media-in-themselves and analogue media-in-themselves but also to consider the transversal **movements** of media that might make these generic distinctions less distinct and the making of kinded-ness a less readily available practice of production and power.

68 How might we think 'cross media blow-back' between digital and analogue media without thinking in family trees. By cross media blow-back, I am referring to aesthetic, political and social skeuomorphs, anticipations, feeds, circulations, structurations, codifications, **movement** and most importantly, material *affects*, and temporal circuits that work in both directions—from the analogue to the digital and from the digital to the analogue. The particular concerns at hand locate us in a once familiar and yet estranged domain. Much theoretical, critical and practical articulations have been written suggesting many ways in which we might begin to think of digital video, Web 2.0, electronic literatures, 'instructional technology' based pedagogies, and the immersion and interactivity of digital production as constituting a generic *break* with cinema, television, print literary culture, and the 'traditional' classroom. And most often this is delivered in terms of genre, material and processual instantiations, or absolute medial *difference*. What might it do, then to suggest that we slow down our classificatory fervour in order to consider how so-called analogue and digital productions traverse each other as the cross media movements of a mixed reality terrain in ways that do not first necessitate a review of the totalising effects medial difference, identity or chronological usurpation?

69

What Katherine Hayles terms in *Writing Machines* 'Media Specific Analysis' is a critically important approach to genre-based, interpretive textual, visual and cultural studies, but what I strongly assert is that the extension of critical approaches emerging with certain analogue cultural production (including for example, apparatus, subjectivity and representational theories) and 'applying' these approaches wholesale to digital production may not be fully sufficient to provide descriptive analyses, critical responses or pedagogies to the qualities, the spatio-temporal materialities and **movements** of either our *new*, digital, or our *old*, analogue, media much the less our *old*, digital, and *new*, analogue, media. In addition, if the apparatus, the subjective, and the representational must be taken up first and foremost, then we may find that after a bit, our 'new' media won't, perhaps already doesn't, have quite the ruptured quality that the doomed-to-age moniker of newness suggests. We find ourselves retracing already overcooked and well-worn moves that define genre in terms of politically and aesthetically challenged terms of difference and kind, new, old and older, inclusion and exclusion, and ultimately valuable and de-valued. An approach to media of various kinds that does indeed sequester time to its purposes need not presume the developmental narrative drawn at the feet of Chronos such that, 'in the beginning' was the cave drawing, which gave way to the illuminated manuscript. Then as if birthing the modern, the novel emerged with no greater calling than to recede at its zenith under the sign of visual and literary cultural practice to the ascension of digital art. This narrative is an academic cliché, and both comforting and appealing in its familiarity and even moments of demonstrability. But we have little time to rehearse post-structural interventions that have already allowed us to see the Emperor's new clothes and at times to witness his navel-gazing. To drag slow and linear developmental narratives already problematised in analogue production onto the speedy transversal **movements** of digitised cultural production and globalized economies seems akin to retrofitting airplanes with wooden wheels or to retrofitting one's RL closet with a Second Life inventory of clothing … neither work.

Social Compositing (Writing Inside/Outside the Academy): 3rd Classroom Detour: Cyber-Comp@QC.CUNY.edu

70 As a postscript that does not come at the end, a final trip into the classroom. I have worked with my department and the administration to rethink Queens College's two required composition classes and designed two new models that move composition pedagogy toward an engagement with that flood of writing that students participate in daily as Yancey asserts. In addition, there now exists a Digital Writing Requirement for both semesters of the first year writing courses. In the first, students practice digital and avatar-based personal, analytical and research writing across digital platforms such as MySpace, instant and text messaging, blogs, Wikis, HTML and other composite text, sound and image or text-messaging platforms. The administration has supported our efforts by offering rare resources in the form of smaller class sizes (16 and 22 respectively) and technology in the classrooms, such as display boards, laptops, Mac Minis, projectors, digital cameras and scanners.

71 As importantly, I created a special pilot program, Cyber-Comp, which functions as an introduction to college writing authored entirely in digital mediated platforms. Cyber-Comp is a program that, with the enormous efforts of several colleagues, almost all of whom are part-time flexible labour at the College, brings to practice many of the concerns that have been stressed in this piece, and perhaps more provocatively has allowed us to think of these courses as a place for experimentation, thought and massive productivity. For the section I taught in the Spring 2007 semester, the students maintained a nearly 100% attendance and homework completion rate, and the quality and cogency of verbal expression from my students surpassed all my projections for success. My students are invested, excited, competitive, rhetorically savvy and proud. In total, students wrote what would have been the equivalent of seventy-five fully revised critical pages of academic discourse, a figure that represents three times the required amount. Furthermore, this quantified accounting cannot describe the non-verbal forms of rhetoric or digital styles that were used in the various assignments. I currently supervise nine sections of our specialized Cyber-Comp, and my colleagues' experiences and assessment of student work unanimously echo my own. Our students are collaborative and capable of collective knowledge making practices. They have yet to write a 'paper' and yet they have written well and written more than any other writing class. Finally, I will share my mantras, delivered at nearly all pedagogy development workshops: 1)

if students write prolifically for fun or competition outside class then we can find a way to hack that sense of social pleasure for academic writing, and 2) if students know how to operate the hardware or navigate the software better than the teacher, take notes and let the student teach the class.

The Middle

72 From Spinoza, we might define *affect* as the power of bodies to impinge upon bodies and it seems to me that digital compositing offers the **movement** and *affect*ions of critical engagement that empower the student of writing rather than capture her in a form of thought that not only precedes and excludes her, but does not require nor engage her, remediates her body, *affect*ions and powers to in-*form* thought in deadened material inscription. Compositing carries with it many compositional practices but opens onto the body of knowledge as a cross medial *affect*ive body with and constituted through a heterotropic and heteroglossia of *affect*ive and *affect*ed bodies in productive motion, our integrated digital media, our students and our own. Time to write.

Author's Biography

Jamie Skye Bianco is Assistant Professor of English and Co-Director of Composition at Queens College of the City University of New York. She works in contemporary rhetoric, theory, visual and fibre cultures, film, electronic literature and print fiction. She is currently working on two book projects, tentatively titled *Mixed Reality: Cross Media Movements* and *Reading Affect/ Affective Reading*.

Notes

[1] Earlier versions and bits of this essay were presented respectively at the American Comparative Literature Conference (March 2006) at Princeton University and in a series of ongoing faculty development workshops produced in the Composition Program, of which I am currently Co-Director with Prof. Duncan Faherty, and the Cyber-Composition Program ('Cyber-Comp'), of which I am Director, in the Department of English at Queens College of the City University of New York. My gratitude goes to several colleagues for conversations and presentations in the workshops, particularly Devin Zuber and Hugh English. Perhaps most intensely, I owe a debt of happy gratitude to the 'Cyber-Comp' instructors for following my unfinished theoretical tracks to create a Program that was invented out of our collective labors. To instructors Rebekah Rutkoff, Jesse Schwartz and Justin Rogers-Cooper — thank you for being first and being willing to fail, and to instructors Karen Weingarten, Fiona Lee, Brooks Hefner, Jenny Kijowski and Steve Alvarez — thank you for joining in and elaborating our project. We are still unsure for we have learned that this is the best *affect* from which to composite our classroom practices. My thanks also for editorial feedback and support from my working group: Karen Weingarten, Rebekah Sheldon, Justin Rogers-Cooper and Jesse Schwartz.

[back]

[2] Bianco, Jamie 'Skye', *New Media and Technoscience Fictions: Affect, Speed, Control* (New York: Dissertation submitted to the Ph.D. Program in English, the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 2005).

[back]

[3] A debt of terminological gratitude must go to Rebekah Rutkoff, my colleague at Queens College, who introduced me to her concept of 'dilated writing,' similar to both an expanding iris in film theory and a ripple effect in liquid.

[back]

[4]'Cross media movements' is the proposed title of my current book project and will be discussed at length further along in the essay. Briefly, the term refers to the translatability and transversal quality of coded affect, cultural production, discursive nodes and many other streams and modes of experimentation and expression to circulate, transit and resonate simultaneously in multiple locations. Two brief examples taken from analogue and digital cultures: the adaptation, which functions to move narrative codes across media; and ARG's or alternate reality games, which are basically hunt and discover games requiring facility, fluency and literacy across various digital and analogue code systems and media to follow the hunt and to play.

[back]

[5] For my purposes here, I'd like to consider composition primarily in the latter sense, but for what I hope will become apparent as the composition of my argument here unfurls, is informed by and pushing the field of Composition and Rhetoric and more importantly academic writing at large.

[back]

[6] 'Guarding the tower' is a reference to Mina Shaughnessy, 'Diving In: An Introduction to Basic Writing', *College Composition and Communication* 27.3 (October 1976) 234-239. The second reference is of course to Robert Scholes, *The Rise and Fall of English* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

[back]

[7] There is much to be written about the spacing and intervals cross-currenting the works of Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze. This issue is taken up in a book project on which I am currently working. It considers approaches to materialist (rather than emotive) affective critique in the humanities. A preview of this work will appear in the *electronic book review* (ebr) in an essay forthcoming and tentatively titled 'Reading Affect/Affective Reading.'

[back]

[8] A process that is already well in progress and is re-arranging several disciplines and fields in the U.S. academy. The recent upsurge of interest in 'Literature and Science' is a recent symptom of this exciting tendency in English Studies and Literary Studies. In fact, in the last five years the appearance of STS—Science and Technology Studies—programs and departments across the country alludes to a further step in this reterritorialization of knowledge claims.

[back]

[9] Hansen, Mark B. N. *New Philosophy for New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 2004) is the second of his monographs addressing the issue of new media and human embodiment. Moreover, as the title to Hansen's first book alludes, *Embodying Technesis: Technology beyond Writing* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000), Hansen's work argues against an outside to the phenomenology of the human body. In the quotation, Hansen strongly asserts that technology operates in a feedback loop with the human body cultivated by the human body itself and that technology is itself the offspring of the human body.

[back]

[10] For an extended discussion of the differentiations between and among theories of materialist and emotive affect, please see my forthcoming 'Reading Affect/Affective Reading' at the electronic book review (ebr).

[back]

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